

## Women are Still Blinded by the Glare of the “Glass Ceiling” in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

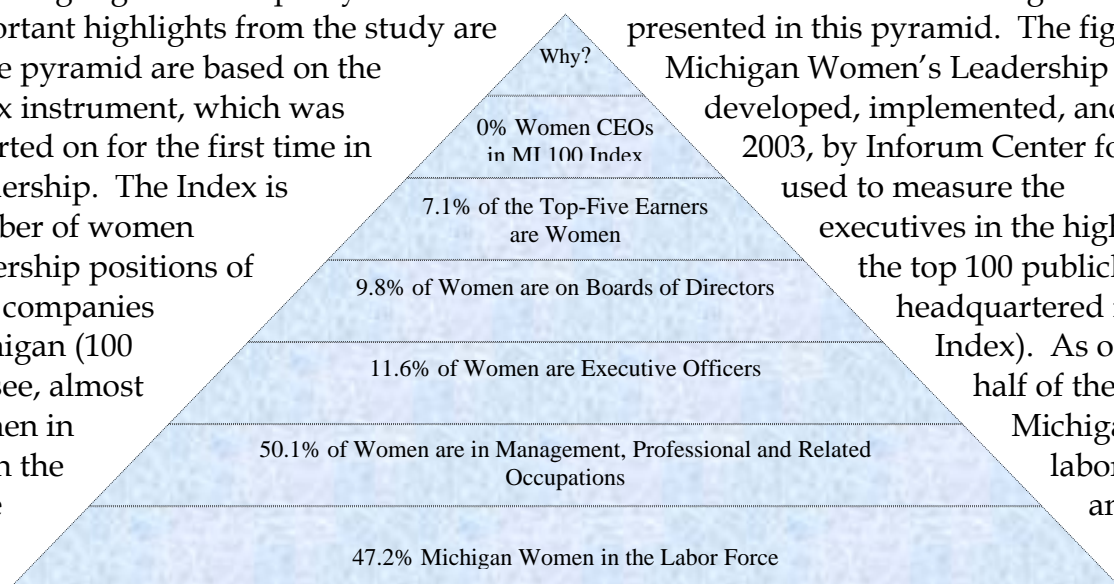
### What is the “Glass Ceiling”?

The glass ceiling is the theory that women and minorities do not advance into senior management executive positions within corporate America. Historically, the “glass ceiling” dates back to a 1979 article written by Katherine Lawrence and Marianne Schreiber of Hewlett-Packard, describing that on the surface it seemed that women could find themselves on the path to promotion, but in actuality women were on a dead-end path. The term “glass ceiling” was used again in 1984 and 1986 – when two Wall Street Journal reporters used the phrase to describe the invisible barrier that blocks women from top positions in corporate America. Since then, the metaphor has also been applied to the barriers that all marginalized populations encounter.

### Hasn’t the “Glass Ceiling” been shattered since women are in the labor force now more than ever?

Unfortunately, the answer is no. According to a study published by Tulane University in May of 2008, there is evidence to suggest from 1992 to 2005 data that there is still a long way to go before gender equity is achieved and the glass ceiling is lifted from the executive market. For example, Michigan’s Inforum Center for Leadership conducted a study with the Ross Business School of the University of Michigan in 2007, which highlights the disparity that women in executive markets face in Michigan.

Important highlights from the study are presented in this pyramid. The figures in the pyramid are based on the Michigan Women’s Leadership Index instrument, which was developed, implemented, and reported on for the first time in 2003, by Inforum Center for Leadership. The Index is used to measure the number of women executives in the highest held companies of the top 100 publicly-headquartered in Michigan (100 Index). As one can see, almost half of the Michigan labor force and women in the labor force occupy professional and management positions. While half of the women in Michigan’s labor force occupy professional and managerial positions, women are practically absent from the ranks of executive officers, top-five earners, and there is not one woman CEO in the 100 publicly-held companies headquartered in



Michigan. These numbers are particularly discouraging considering in the 2006 to 2007 academic year, 58 percent of Bachelor's degree earners were women and 61 percent of Master's degree recipients were women.

While the outlook for women in executive management positions in corporate America is rather bleak, there were 8 out of the 100 companies headquartered in Michigan, according to the Michigan Inforum Center for Leadership, that are considered to be the "most valuable players" in terms of the percentage of women on the board of directors and top five compensated officers. The following companies are the "most valuable players":

- ❖ FNBH Bancorp
- ❖ Asset Acceptance Capital
- ❖ American Physicians Capital
- ❖ Compuware
- ❖ Wolverine World Wide
- ❖ X-rite
- ❖ Comerica
- ❖ ArvinMeritor

**The "Glass Ceiling" in Politics must be shattered now that Governor Palin is a VP running mate and Senator Clinton was a Presidential hopeful, right?**

Unfortunately, the answer to this question is also no. While Victoria Woodhull ran for the Presidency in 1872, before women were guaranteed the right to vote in every state and that now women make up 51 percent of the population, women in politics are still blinded by the glare of the glass ceiling.

In the United States Congress, only 87 women serve out of the 535 seats available. This means that only 16.3 percent of the seats in Congress are occupied by women while the remaining 83.7 percent of seats are occupied by men. Looking at the U.S. Senate reveals that 16 out of the 100 available seats are occupied by women or 16 percent. In the U.S. House, 71 of the 435 available seats are women or 16.3 percent.

In 2007, there were 9 women Governors in the United States, including Michigan's first woman Governor Jennifer M. Granholm. Sadly, only 29 women have ever served as Governor and in only 22 states.

In the state legislatures within the United States, women hold about 24 percent of the 7,382 available seats. In Michigan, 9 out of the 38 seats in the Michigan Senate are held by women or 24 percent and 20 out of the 110 seats in the Michigan House are held by women or 18 percent.

When looking at the data from a geographical standpoint, women are more likely to be represented in states out West or states that are considered to have more progressive political traditions. Southern states are disproportionately more likely to have the fewest women officeholders. For example, six of the ten states with the highest proportion of female state legislators in the West are Washington, Colorado, California, New Mexico, Oregon, and Nevada. Seven of the southern states with the lowest proportion of women are located in the Deep South or Border States such as South Carolina, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Arkansas (CAWP, 2004).

Now that a glass ceiling has been defined and it is evident that one exists in Michigan. The next question is what is going to be done to crack the glass ceiling for women and their daughters?

#### **What can Employees do to chip away at the “glass ceiling” above them?**

1. Commit to breaking the glass ceiling at your place of employment by gathering the support of men and women at your office.
2. Create a support network of friends and family willing to take on the task of ridding the work place of the glare from the glass ceiling for daughters, mothers, wives, and friends.
3. Start gathering company policies on promotion, leave of absence, education and retraining, family leave – examine whether these policies are equitable for both men and women
4. Take notice of the promotions within your place of business and ask yourself – what are my benchmarks for reaching success?
5. Become a mentor by working with young women and daughters to see what paths they are choosing in their education. More women are needed in non-traditional fields. AAUW (2007) found that overall; women working full-time earn *only 80 percent* as much as their male colleagues after being out of college for a year.
6. Create and establish training and education programs to help existing employees move up career ladders in their companies

7. Encourage the institution of family-friendly work benefit programs at your place of employment
8. Consider running for office at any level – and get involved with the White House Project’s training programs and workshops
9. Remember the “glass ceiling” when you vote and talk to candidates

**What can a Business do to remove the glass ceiling?**

1. Establish career development
2. Formalize mentoring programs
3. Keep data to monitor what employees are accomplishing
4. Consider the policies in place; ask yourself – what is the impact on families?

**What has the Michigan Women’s Commission been doing to help crack the glass ceiling?**

1. The Commission gathers data about MI women and update publications pertaining to the status of women and girls in Michigan.
2. The Commission takes proactive steps to educate women and men on the status of Michigan women and the rights of women in employment with MWC publications.
3. The Commission has worked for passage of legislation, primarily around pay equity issues. Michigan law requires equal pay for equal work and a law allowing employees to discuss their salary information.

The Commission has also supported the following pending legislation:

SB 417 (Brater) – bill to provide equal compensation for comparable worth. Assigned to Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee.

HB 4625 (Bauer) – bill amends the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act to provide compensation equally for work of comparable values. Passed House and assigned to the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee.

HB 4626 (Byrnes) – bill amends the Penal Code to provide penalties for violating comparable worth. Passed House and assigned to the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee.

HB 4627 (K. Law) – bill creates a Commission on Pay Equity. Passed House and in the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee.

4. The Commission has held workshops on encouraging women to run for political office at every level – and trained over 100 women. The Commission is also partnering with the White House Project, which is doing the same work full-time.
5. The Commission is also working with women students in colleges and universities to develop leaders of the future. The Commission held their first Young Women, Strong Leaders conference two years ago and reached about 150 students – and are now planning three more conferences for this spring – at Grand Valley State, Wayne State and Alma College. These programs provide opportunities for young women and women who are in the workforce to network.
6. The Commission works with approximately 100 women's organizations continually. The Commission has compiled a directory of women's organizations, which currently has over 700 groups listed. The Commission tries to meet with the women's groups at least once a year to set an agenda and share information with each other.
7. Governor Jennifer M. Granholm established a women's agenda, which includes employment issues and has also appointed more than half of her positions to women.
8. The Michigan Department of Management and Budget is working hard to increase the number of women and minority-owned businesses doing business with the state. The Commission is trying to help make people aware of the Buy Michigan First program.

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